



To Year 9

Options information  
and guidance evening  
for parents and students



# Overview of the evening



## Main Hall -

A presentation from Mr Halifax (Vice Principal) and Mrs Appleyard (Progress Leader – Year 9)

## Purpose

- *To give the necessary **context** to your child's option choices.*
- *To go through the **process involved** in your child selecting their option choices.*
- *Offer general **advice and guidance** as to which subjects or subject combinations to choose or not.*
- *To answer any **questions** you may have about your child's transition into Key Stage 4.*

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# Overview of the evening



Dining hall

## *The Curriculum Fayre*

*Every subject studied at the Vale of York Academy is represented tonight.*

### Purpose

- *Allow you (parents and pupils) to gain a **greater appreciation** of what is involved in studying various subjects in Key Stage 4.*
- *To **talk to subject specialists** about the specific content of each subject.*
- *To **ask questions**:*
  - *To supplement the detail provided within the options booklet.*
  - *Clarify any changes and developments to the examination courses.*
  - *As to the suitability of your child considering specific courses.*
  - *Regarding the process of making your option choices.*

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# Options choices- Background & context

The Department for Education (DofE) tells schools how they must make up the curriculum pupils receive. The aim is to provide all pupils across the country with a **broad and balanced curriculum** with schools taking a similar quantity of qualifications. There are a **number of core subjects that are compulsory** to all schools.

## Compulsory subjects are:

- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE English (*Language & Literature*)\*
- GCSE Science (*Combined or Separate*)\*

## Non-examined Core subjects:

- Worldview & Modern Issues
- Core PE & IAG - including careers support

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**



Department  
for Education



# Students will take between 8 to 10 qualifications to examination



## GCSE's:

Tend to be more traditional subjects

Exam assessed, small (if any) coursework element

Awarded a 9 to 1 grade

## Non GCSE's: *eg: Cambridge National awards*

These are more vocational (employment orientated)

Tend to be more practical subjects

Have a greater coursework emphasis

Graded Distinction\* to pass (at Level 1 & 2)

**Both have equal status/value**

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# Government guidance:

## Securing the best outcomes for all pupils

The Department for Education make

**a very strong recommendation** about the other subjects a pupil should study up to the age of 16.

At Vale of York we recognise the importance of students achieving the best possible outcomes, so that they are well placed to continue with their chosen educational pathway.

**So we are making it compulsory for students to select at least one EBacc subject.**

EBacc subjects are:

- GCSE Geography
- GCSE History
- GCSE German
- GCSE French
- GCSE Computer Science
- GCSE Separate Sciences (*Bio/Chem/Phys*)

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**



Department  
for Education



# Options – DfE information sheet



# EBacc



## HELP YOUR CHILD MAKE THE BEST GCSE CHOICES

You and your child may currently be considering, with advice from their school, what GCSE subjects they should take next year.

The Department for Education recommends these core subjects, which make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), and help keep options for young people open:

- English language and English literature
- Maths
- Science  
Combined science or 3 single sciences from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Computer science
- History or Geography
- A language  
Ancient or modern



### WHAT IS THE EBACC?

The EBacc is not a qualification in its own right – it's a combination of GCSE subjects, including a language, that offer an important range of knowledge and skills to young people.

### EBACC FUTURE PROOFS YOUR CHILD'S PROSPECTS

While your child may not have decided on their future career path yet, choosing the EBacc at GCSE gives them access to a full range of employment options when they leave secondary school and the broad knowledge that employers are looking for.

If they are thinking of going to university, the EBacc is also recommended by Britain's most prestigious universities.

The research found that students studying EBacc subjects for GCSE, were more likely to stay in education after 16.

The Centre for Longitudinal Studies, August 2017

### LANGUAGES GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE A COMPETITIVE EDGE

Languages are an important part of EBacc. Studying a foreign language can be extremely rewarding and exciting. They provide an insight into other cultures and can open the door to travel and employment opportunities. They can also broaden pupils' horizons, helping them flourish in new environments.

If your child finds languages difficult, don't forget that they will have been studying them for much less time than their other subjects and, while it can be a challenge, learning a language will greatly enhance their future opportunities.

What's more, we know that employers value languages, as they are increasingly important to make sure we can compete in the global market. Because of this, languages are increasingly becoming a requirement for many graduate schemes, such as those offered by Lidl.

"Having language skills under your belt will help make you stand out from the crowd, whether you're applying for an entry level position, a management role or an internal transfer."

Steve Cassidy, Senior Vice President & Managing Director, UK & Ireland, Hilton

The Russell Group has named languages as subjects that open doors to more degrees at universities. (The Russell Group is a group of 24 universities with a shared focus on research and a reputation for academic achievement)

"Young people skilled in the languages of Europe, China and other key markets around the world, can look forward to exciting and rewarding careers."

Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce

### WHAT ABOUT ARTS AND MUSIC?

While arts and music are not included in the EBacc, every child should still experience a high-quality arts and cultural education throughout their time at school as part of a balanced curriculum. If your child can take 9 GCSEs, they will have either 1 or 2 further options and can choose subjects based on their wider interests like art or music as well as others such as physical education or technology.

Schools where more pupils select the EBacc at GCSE maintain the number of pupils that select arts.

Trends in arts subjects in schools with increased EBacc entry July 2017



Further information  
Search EBacc on GO.UK for more information.

You should also get in touch with your child's school directly – they will be able to tell you about their specific GCSE and EBacc offer and explain all of your child's options.

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

Found in your pack

# Option choices

Changes to examinations

New GCSE grades explained

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| 9                 | A* |
| 8                 | A  |
| 7                 |    |
| 6                 | B  |
| 5 (strong pass)   | C  |
| 4 (standard pass) | D  |
| 3                 | E  |
| 2                 | F  |
| 1                 | G  |
| U                 | U  |

New exams are written to be..



**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**



# Options – Key benchmark measures



## English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

This is an ever increasingly important measure for pupils. The EBacc measure is designed to demonstrate pupil performance across a range of academic subjects.

It indicates that they have achieved GCSE grades in:

*English, Mathematics and at least two Sciences\*, one humanity based subject and one modern foreign language.*

*NB-pupils will also achieve GCSE's in other subjects*



## Progress/Attainment 8

This measure is to ensure that pupils at KS4 cover a broad and balanced curriculum.

Students will select courses to ensure that they meet the following subjects:

*English, Mathematics, two Sciences, at least one other EBacc subject and at least three other qualifications (these maybe EBacc).*



**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# The Progress 8 measure

Achieving a broad and balanced curriculum



**English**

Double-weighted\*

**Maths**

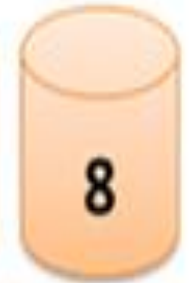
Double-weighted

*\*Higher score of English Language or English Literature double-weighted if a student has taken both qualifications*



**EBacc qualifications**

(sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages)



**'Open group'**

**Remaining EBacc qualifications and other approved qualifications**

(GCSEs and other approved academic, arts or vocational qualifications)

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

## Our Curriculum commitment

*To support, challenge and enthuse each child as to give their very best and develop a passion for future life.*

## ***Semper Ad Optimum***

*“Always giving the best”*

### **What does that look like?**

- *High standard/High expectations*
- *Great teaching and learning*
- *A wide range of opportunities*

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**



Leaders have put in place a *“well thought-out curriculum”*  
Ofsted Dec 19

# Your Options Booklet 2024-26



This is an invaluable reference resource to support and inform you through the whole options process.

*The final item in your pack is the options form for you to use as a reference before completing your final option choices via a Google form.*

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**



# Subject info-videos on the website

Curriculum Leaders have recorded short informational videos giving you a course overview and attempted to answer many FAQ's. Please watch.

## Year 9 Options

### Year 9 Options

**Welcome to the Year 9 Options process.**

For the first time, your child has the opportunity to influence the curriculum they will study and as such will have to make some important decisions about their education over the coming weeks. As an Academy, we will endeavour to provide an options experience that will support you and your child through every step of the process so that they make an informed choice and are happy about the subjects they will ultimately take to examination.

Our **Options Booklet** contains a wealth of information about the options process as well as an informative course guide for each subject, so please do read it carefully.

See links below

[View Core Subject videos](#)

[View EBacc Subject videos](#)

[View Open Option videos](#)

[View Study Plus videos](#)

We look forward to seeing you at the Options Evening on Wednesday 8th of February 2023.

#### YEAR 9 OPTIONS

[Year 9 Options](#)

[Core Subjects](#)

[EBacc Subjects](#)

[Open Subjects](#)

[Study Plus](#)

#### TWITTER



VOY Transition, Community & Pupil Premium Lead

[@valeofyorkcomco](#)

[@ValeYorkAcademy](#) Christmas Fair tonight 6-8 organised by our amazing parent group

[@vale\\_society](#) . Lots of stalls, entertainment and festive fun!!!!

See you later!!! [#Christmas](#)

[pic.twitter.com/g658...](https://pic.twitter.com/g658...)

# Example letter in your packs



## Vale of York Academy – Option Choices 2024

As outlined in the Vale of York 2024 options booklet your child will receive a strong recommendation from the Academy to follow one of four pathways. This recommendation is based upon historic academic performance, current progress and appropriateness of course selection to enable the best opportunities for your child post 16.

It is our strong recommendation that your child follows the [ENHANCED PATHWAY](#)

This means that your child will achieve the Ebacc suite of qualifications, recognised at Post16 and beyond.

[Click here to complete the Google Form](#)

### How to complete your child's option selection:

Using the information below make your choices on the google form link above

1. From Grid A (Ebacc) select an MFL subject from line 1 and a humanity subject from line 2.
2. Then make your 'priority' selection. This is the subject you wish to do more than any other from Grid B, without duplicating a selection already made from Grid A.
3. Finally make ALL three additional 'preference' selections; once again from Grid B not duplicating a previous selection. Please do not leave any preference selections empty.

### Subjects available for selection

| GRID A: Ebacc choices |           |         |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| LINE 1 (MFL)          | French    | German  |
| LINE 2 (Humanity)     | Geography | History |

| GRID B: Open choices |                  |                      |                    |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Art & Design         | Business Studies | Computer Science     | Design Engineering |
| Drama                | PE               | French               | Food & Nutrition   |
| Geography            | German           | Health & Social Care | History            |
| Music                | Psychology       | Religious Studies    | Separate Science   |

Please take time to consider the choices you will eventually submit. Read the booklet, watch subject videos on our website, do some wider research and speak to your class teachers. There is no immediate rush to return the Googleform however please ensure it is completed and returned no later than **Wednesday 28th February**. Should you require any support or assistance during the options process contact your child's form tutor by email or if it is a subject specific query email the relevant Curriculum Leader. Submit your choices via the Googleform link on this page.



*This is an example of the letter that will be emailed to parents on Tuesday 20th February. You then have until the **28th February** to complete and return it.*

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# Timeline for the 2024 Options



| Options 2024 - Timeline |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| January                 | The process starts via reference to the option process in assemblies and lessons. Pupils can seek support and guidance from their form tutor and or subject teachers.  |
| Tue 23rd January        | <u>Year 9 options taster morning.</u> All pupils will get an insight to Ebaac subjects and some of the courses not studied in KS3.   |
| Jan/Feb                 | Year 9 pupils will sit their Spring term assessment in every subject.  |
| Tue 6th February        | <u>Options information evening.</u> All parents and carers of year 9 pupils are invited to attend this event where families will receive all the necessary information about the options process and their option booklet. |
| Tue 20th February       | <u>Year 9 Parents evening - Online</u>   |
| 21st - 28th February    | <u>Submission window for option choice.</u> Families will receive their personalised Google Form option letter via email, sent after parent evening on the night before. Families have one week to complete and submit.    |
| Wed 28th February       | <u>Deadline</u> for the completion of the google form with your child's option choices.  |
| Easter to June          | Processing and resolving of matters arising from pupils' choices.  |
| Late June               | All pupils are informed of their option choices by letter.   |

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

**Parents evening 20th February - When booking please prioritise subjects your child has a distinct interest in**

# Making the right selections...



Making the right subject choices can be difficult...

*Based upon your child's performance in school we have made a strong recommendation as to the 'Pathway' best suited to them and ensuring the best outcomes for them.*

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**



# The Option Pathways - EXPLAINED!

The **Enhanced** pathway secures the EBacc qualification.

- *Initially you select your Modern Foreign Language and a Humanity choice thereby qualifying for the EBacc award.*
- *Then you select FOUR further subjects of which you will end up studying TWO of them.*

# Options choices

## *Pupils with a second language*

Any pupil who can meet the entry requirements of another GCSE Modern Foreign Language can use this language to be EBacc compliant and therefore be:

- either be a dual linguist
- or not follow the Enhanced pathway

*(Entry requirements:*

*In summary write, read and speak an additional language, and commit to preparing for GCSE exams in their own time. Subjects inc: Spanish/Turkish/Polish/ Mandarin/Urdu/Arabic/ Russian/Greek)*

*Speak to Mr Halifax for clarification*

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**



# The Option Pathways - IMPORTANT



The **Supported** pathway secures the progress 8 measure.

- *You are automatically placed into Study+ (additional Maths, English & Science lesson and access to the AQA unit award).*
- *You select your one EBacc subject.*
- *Then you select FOUR further subjects of which you will end up studying TWO of them.*

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# Priority & Preference selections



Pupils will be required to make **one PRIORITY SELECTION.**

*This is the one subject you wish to do more than any other.*

*I will always endeavour to **GUARANTEE** this subject.*

# There are 16 subjects available to choose

Red text denotes an EBacc subject

|                                 |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Art &amp; Design</b><br>GCSE | <b>Business Studies</b><br>GCSE                                       | <b>Computer Science</b><br>GCSE                                 | <b>Design Engineering /<br/>Manufacturing</b><br>Cambridge National Award |
| <b>Drama</b><br>GCSE            | <b>Exam PE</b><br>Both Cambridge National<br>Award & GCSE courses run | <b>French</b><br>GCSE   | <b>Food &amp; Nutrition</b><br>GCSE                                       |
| <b>Geography</b><br>GCSE        | <b>German</b><br>GCSE   | <b>Health &amp; Social<br/>Care</b><br>Cambridge National Award | <b>History</b><br>GCSE  |
| <b>Music</b><br>GCSE            | <b>Psychology</b><br>GCSE   | <b>Religious Studies</b><br>GCSE                                | <b>Separate Science</b><br>GCSE   |

*NB: The Academy retain the right to decide which level and qualification pupils will be entered for based upon ensuring the best outcomes for all pupils.*

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# How to submit your options?



Please ONLY use the personal link emailed to you as it is assigned to you.

## The link can be found

Follow the order of the questions on the form, use the information on the letter to help

Each pathway will require a different response

Submitting will send your final choices to school

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

### Vale of York Academy – Option Choices 2024

As outlined in the Vale of York 2024 options booklet your child will receive a strong recommendation from the Academy to follow one of four pathways. This recommendation is based upon historic academic performance, current progress and appropriateness of course selection to enable the best opportunities for your child post 16.

It is our strong recommendation that your child follows the **ENHANCED PATHWAY**. This means that your child will achieve the Ebacc suite of qualifications, recognised at Post16 and beyond.

[Click here to complete the Google Form](#)

#### How to complete your child's option selection:

Using the information below make your choices on the google form link above

1. From Grid A (EBacc) select an MFL subject from line 1 and a humanity subject from line 2.
2. Then make your 'priority' selection. This is the subject you wish to do more than any other from Grid B, without duplicating a selection already made from Grid A.
3. Finally make ALL three additional 'preference' selections; once again from Grid B not duplicating a previous selection. Please do not leave any preference selections empty.

#### Subjects available for selection

| GRID A: EBacc choices |           |         |  |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|--|
| LINE 1 (MFL)          | French    | German  |  |
| LINE 2 (Humanity)     | Geography | History |  |

| GRID B: Open choices |                  |                      |                    |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Art & Design         | Business Studies | Computer Science     | Design Engineering |
| Drama                | PE               | French               | Food & Nutrition   |
| Geography            | German           | Health & Social Care | History            |
| Music                | Psychology       | Religious Studies    | Separate Science   |

# What Next...

## Tonight

Talk to subject staff at the Curriculum Fayre

- *It can be as useful to eliminate possibilities as well as firm up choices*

## Over the coming days

Discuss with your child what subjects they wish to study

- *Encourage your child to speak to their subject teachers if unsure*

## Do some wider research:

**What do they need to access post 16 or career choices?**

- *Book in for online Parents Evening – on Wednesday 1st March*
- *Fully access/engage with our Options taster day Wednesday 22nd Feb*
- *Look at post 16, university course and job entry requirements*

## Then carefully complete the Googleform (emailed to you)

There is no need to hand in a paper copy, unless agreed in advance

# Wednesday 28th February

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**



# The Big Question

## Will my child get their choices?



**We will endeavour** to give all pupils their intended choices, however due to the sheer number of permutations **we cannot guarantee** it. Hence why we ask for a **priority** and then several **preferences**.

For the majority of students the submission of their form will be the end of the matter until you receive confirmation of your options in the Summer term.

However, if there any issues or concerns the school (me) will be in contact as soon as possible seeking to find the right solution for your child.

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**



# The Big Question 2

## Can my child change their choices?



It is absolutely essential that the selection of choices that are put down on the options form as the subject you are prepared to study in September.

There is a very short window at the start of each course where (if possible) some pupils can adapt their choices. After that changes are very rarely considered.

**It is always a better option to get it right from the beginning, so please take your time and make selections wisely!**

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# Mrs Appleyard

Progress Leader

Year 9

**Advice and Guidance  
on making your  
option choices**



**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# Which subjects to choose?

**ASK your child to consider the following**

**Which subjects do YOU enjoy ?**

- Do not base your choices solely on a subject teacher.
- Do not base your choices on your friends.

**Consider workload.** *ALL subjects are hard! All require work out of the classroom, so it is important you enjoy them and are interested.*

If you've no clear plans, keep options as open as possible.

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

# Supporting your child

## What to think about...



It is highly recommended that both parent/guardian and pupil:

- Talk to teachers about student potential within a subject at parents' evening.
- Read and analyse previous report grades.
- Explore subject specific details and requirements of possible final subject choices.
- Research and consider next steps. Will these choices enable possible post 16 or career opportunities?
- Speak to older students currently studying the courses.

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

*There are no "soft" or "easy" options  
It is an unavoidable fact that ...  
GCSE's are hard work!!*



**IN SUMMARY:** *Our best advice to making your option choices is...*

- Choose subjects you enjoy studying because of the content and not because of the teacher who maybe teaching it.
- Don't be influenced by what your peers are doing.
- Choose subjects that you look forward to because you will have spend a lot of time out of the classroom extending learning.
- Choose subjects that will allow you to keep as many options open or relate to a specific career choice you have in mind.

**ALWAYS GIVING THE BEST**

If you wish to please  
wait behind to speak  
to Mr Halifax or  
Mrs Appleyard



Otherwise...

Please make your way to the  
Dining hall to talk to our  
subject specialist at the  
Curriculum Fayre

# SUCCESS IS AN ICEBERG



SUCCESS

People see this.

RISKS  
FOCUS  
GOALS  
PERSISTENCE  
FAILURE  
MASSIVE ACTION  
SACRIFICE  
HABITS  
HARD WORK

What really happens.

